

STATE OF MICHIGAN
Family
Independence
Agency

CIS + ASSIST 2 = CIMS

FIA Customer Information Management System plan unveiled

September
2001

In this issue

Arenac hits zero.....3

**Gov. signs budget
bills.....4**

From the Director...5

**Achiever Vivian
Gonzales.....6**

**FIA Spanish-English
translation group....8**

**Wayne County food
stamp summit.....9**

**Maxey graduates
113 successes..... 11**

**First regional SDM
conference..... 12**

**Barry County youth
vols honored..... 13**

**2nd Youth Leader-
ship Forum 14**

**Achiever Leah
Mathis..... 15**

**Child care billing
changes..... 16**

**A small success,
Derek Sanders..... 17**

Tribal summit..... 19

JJOLT!.....20

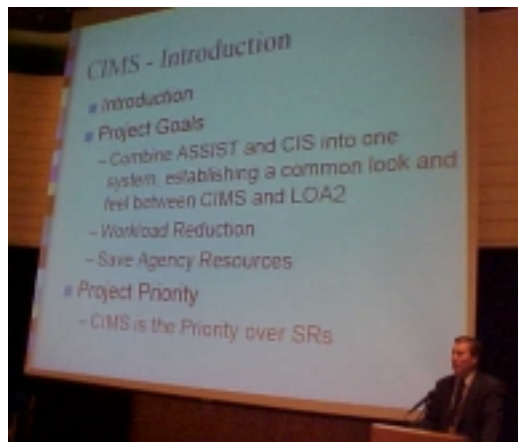
Michigan.gov.....22

**Intercepted
letters.....23**

LANSING—It's not alphabet soup, but code for the newest direction in FIA online case management. The FIA is optimistic it is a formula to reduce employee time at their computers, too.

FIA director Douglas E. Howard and other agency executives kicked off the Customer Information Management System, (or CIMS, pronounced sims), at a special gathering at the Michigan Library Forum Aug. 6.

The occasion was to unveil projections for the Customer Information Management System, which will be the electronic interface for CIS and ASSIST screens and their combined database.



FIA director Howard introduces the Customer Management Information System during a meeting Aug. 6. The new system is under way and should begin showing up online during summer 2002.

continued on page2

Customer Information Management System

continued from page 1

Mike Scieszka, FIA's chief information officer, said the project is not a replacement for ASSIST, nor does it add functionality to ASSIST or CIS. Instead, it will offer a unified and simplified set of screens, making CIMS an easier system to use.

CIMS development is already under way and will begin in earnest in November, when most FIA technology development staff begin to dedicate 100 percent of their time to the project. If completed on-schedule, the program would be completely operational late in calendar year 2002 with CIS web screen changes implemented next summer.

Howard said the system will be unveiled statewide as functionalities are completed, not in a regional rollout process like Electronic Benefits Transfer.

"I don't believe in the big bang theory," Howard said. "As pieces come up and are functional—and not in conflict with other systems—we will roll them out."

CIMS is being developed as a web-based application available to employees via the FIA-Net. It will streamline access between customer registration, budgeting and other online requirements. It is the next step in creating a common interface with a streamlined look, web access and common navigation.

FIA Outstate Operations director Jim Nye said the new system would, when successfully implemented, save time for FIA employees by:

- Using a single sign-on for all customer programs.
- Employing uniform keystrokes between programs such as CIS, ASSIST and LOA2.
- Reducing employee time navigating between screens and formats, similar to a windows format.
- Requiring new staff to learn only a single system.

He said the application would mean improved service to agency customers by better serving agency employees.

"We don't need any more changes that won't help," Nye said. "Less multiple screens, fewer keystrokes and less data time means more customer time."

Janet Strobe, director of FIA Office of Financial Assistance Programs, said the Family Independence Services Administration agreed to a freeze on new policy changes with systems implications during the period CIMS is in development—from November 2001 through its projected completion in late 2002.

During that time, she said, maintenance requests will be worked on but only critical service requests will be honored. "CIMS is the priority," she said.

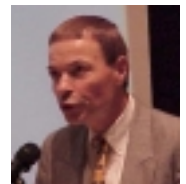
The first CIMS system release will probably not contain new functionality. Sue Doby, the FIA Information Technology manager overseeing the project, said ASSIST assignment-reassignment and base group functionality will be improved through CIMS.

FIA employees can reach the CIMS website through FIA-Net by adding /CIMS/ suffix to the onscreen address and hitting the "GO" key. This website will update development and implementation plans for the CIMS application. It will serve as the distribution center for the most current status, tools, job aids and training schedules.

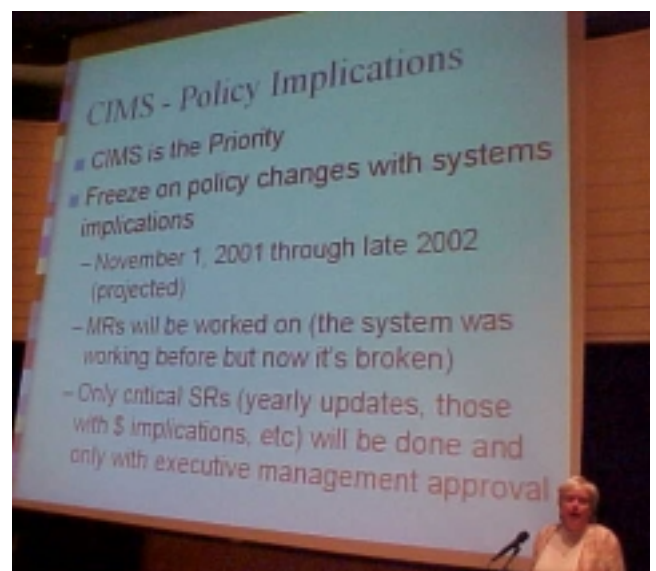
Buttons on the website will become active as information on each topic becomes available.



Mike Scieszka



Jim Nye



Janet Strobe discussed policy implications because of CIMS development.

Arenac County hits zero

The Arenac County Project Zero program reached “zero” Aug. 6, becoming the 90th Project Zero site to reach “zero” at least once since September 1997.



Bob Adams

Project Zero began with six pilot sites in July 1996 and is operational at 103 sites in all 83 Michigan counties.

“Congratulations to Bob Adams and his staff,” said FIA director Douglas Howard. “They and their community partners have done an outstanding job. Congratulations also to hard-working FIP customers and the Arenac County employers who hired them.”

“Zero” is the point in time when all target Family Independence Program cases expected to work are earning income. Target cases are those open at least 60 days, required to participate in the Work First program and expected to have earnings.

“It’s been a whirl in Arenac during the first six months since I was named county director,” said Arenac County FIA director Robert Adams.

“Arenac FIA had a lot thrown at them with both a new director and Project Zero, but the professionals there jumped right in and made it happen. The progress was steady and inspiring.”

Arenac County is a part of a dual county FIA administrative unit with Gladwin County.

■ For more information consult the [updated Project Zero page](#) at the FIA website: www.mfia.state.mi.us



FIA Icon

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Governor signs FIA, other budget bills

FY 2002 budget supports CSES completion, increases adoption subsidies, two \$100,000 expenditures vetoed

LANSING—Governor John Engler signed Public Act 82, the Family Independence Agency budget bill for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, on July 25.

The FIA budget totals \$3.6 billion, of which \$1.2 billion is general fund support. It provides \$37 million to implement an aggressive strategy to complete the Child Support Enforcement System.

“The legislature’s support in completing the Child Support Enforcement System is vital to ensuring that children receive the child support payments they deserve,” said Engler.

The budget includes an Adoption Subsidy Program increase of \$21.4 million and \$33.9 million increase for child care.

“With the resources, more than 21,000 children will be provided permanent adoptive homes and counties will be fully funded in efforts to serve troubled and neglected children locally,” Engler said.

“As a result of legislative efforts, foster parents and parents receiving adoption subsidies will again receive a rate increase.”

The budget dedicates an additional \$54.4 million to pay for a projected increase of 9,000 cases in the Family Independence Program. The bill includes \$11.5 million in projected savings from a personnel-hiring freeze.

The governor vetoed two \$100,000 items. One was the fourth year of a “Ready to Succeed Dialogue” which he said should be at the stage of implementation with other funding sources used for future meetings. The other was for a career training contract with multicultural institutions he said would be more appropriate in the Career Development budget.

Engler signed budgets for the Department of Career Development and Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “These budgets support many employment opportunities,” he said.

“Funding for the Work First program and for rehabilitation services will allow low-income families to obtain and maintain employment, and disabled persons to transition to the work force.”

From the Director

By Douglas E. Howard

Director, Family Independence Agency



More on customer service

You may or may not know National Customer Service Week is coming in October, a month that traditionally represents many such ceremonial activities.

In the Family Independence Agency, we do a lot to help improve the outcome of our efforts. Most of us have engaged in something meaningful over the past year—whether it was customer service training, development of computer or technical improvements that help get services to our customers, or systematic efforts to improve things like our Food Stamp Program accuracy—with a goal to improve customer service.

Yet when we break all this down to its fundamentals, what we all have in common is we are doing things for other people. And we are trying to be better at that.

I heard something the other day that helped me gain greater insight into customer service and why it is important to try and do a better job.

On a radio interview, business consultant Craig Crawford spoke at length about his market research and how customer preferences have changed a lot just in the past couple years.

Taking issue with the overall excellence mantra of a prior decade, Crawford—who co-authored a book with Ryan Matthews called “The Myth of Excellence”—said they did 10,000 interviews with customers of many businesses and enterprises. A critical conclusion they reached was customers don’t necessarily want companies that do everything well—they want companies that do one thing extremely well.

Crawford said the interviews showed people don’t necessarily want the lowest price, although they want a competitive price. But they want good service at any price.

Crawford gave an example—the burgeoning coffee business. If you are like many people, you have taken a few minutes out of your day sometime to visit a coffee shop. Crawford said the concept of coffee in today’s marketplace equals a break in your day.

In discussing airline service, Crawford said take-off time is important, but what customers really want is more legroom.

While nothing in this interview applied directly to human services, the overall viewpoint expressed was similar to what we found out from interviews with our customers in 1999. We thought they wanted the services delivered in the most timely manner, but our customers told us they wanted to be treated well and to be able to talk to workers.

Turns out customers are saying something in most industries.

¿Recién al País? No Inglés. ¡No Problema!

Puerto Rican mother of three succeeds in U. S. with FIA help, becomes 91st Achiever of the Month

By Cynthia A. Wood, Family Independence Specialist
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CENTREVILLE—El condado de St. Joseph es un sitio de Proyecto Zero. El proposito del Proyecto Zero es de emplear todos los clientes que estan recibiendo ayuda en efectivo. El resultado por falta de participar en actividades relacionadas con empleo sin buena causa es la reducción y/u terminación de beneficios.

Es obligatorio que los clientes recibiendo en efectivo (FIP) atienda ambos, orientación Work First y la primer cesión. Falta de cumplir con la primer cesión de Work First y la Orientación es causa para negarle su aplicación ineligibile por 30 dias de la fecha de aplicación para efectivo (FIP). Falta de cumplir con requisitos de Work First mientras su aplicación es pendiente es causa para negarle FIP un que haiga atendido la primer cesión y Orientación Work First.

Huh?

Confused? Of course. Now imagine that in reverse, as a Spanish-speaking person applying for assistance from an agency in Michigan. Such was the obstacle faced by Vivian Gonzalez in May 2000, when she arrived in Michigan from her native Puerto Rico with her three young children.

Now imagine the great excitement that Vivian's family, her friends and the FIA felt on June 22 when Vivian was recognized as the state's 91st Achiever of the Month, after being nominated for the award by St. Joseph County FIA.

The event took place at the St. Joseph County Intermediate School District office.

Many were on hand to celebrate Vivian's accomplishments including St. Joseph County FIA Board members Susan Martin and Don Schreck. Also looking on to honor Vivian were her three very excited children and FIA employees who watched her progress in the past year.

New beginnings in a new land

Vivian's amazing journey began when she left Puerto Rico with Alexander, then age 8, Naishalee, then 7, and Jomar, then 3. Vivian made the difficult decision to leave her immediate family in Puerto Rico, following the break-up of her marriage, when she determined that as a single parent she could offer her children more opportunities on the mainland U. S.

She chose to come to Michigan where she had family members who were able to offer her emotional support.

"I wanted to show my children that we could do it on our own, without everything being handed to us," said Vivian, who participated in her achiever ceremony with the assistance of a Spanish-English translator.

Barriers beyond the norm

On her arrival Vivian approached the St. Joseph County FIA about services that would help her get on her feet. She had numerous barriers. She had no housing, no money, no child support from the father of her children, no vehicle, had chosen to settle in a Michigan county that had limited public transportation, and the biggest barrier of all—Vivian and her children did not speak English.

As Vivian's family independence specialist, I realized the immediate barriers Vivian and her kids faced because as her specialist I was faced with identical language barriers in working with Vivian!

With the assistance of St. Joseph County eligibility specialist Lori Davis and administrative support worker Alicia Scott, we conducted interviews with Vivian in Spanish, translated policy into Spanish for her, and explained programs in Spanish designed to assist her with independence.

"I got here with nothing when in Puerto Rico I had everything," Vivian said.



Vivian Gonzales with her children, Alexander Candelaria, age 11, Naishalee Candelaria, 9, and Jomar Candelaria, 4.

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¿Recién al País? No Inglés. ¡No Problema!

continued from page 5

“I was so scared, not knowing the language, not knowing how to get transportation, not even knowing how to enroll my children in school.

“The FIA is painted as an ugly place, but people are wrong to do that, because they helped me out so much.”

Many helped with her success

Because of the language barrier, St. Joseph County deferred Vivian from initial participation in Work First, enabling her to enroll in “English As A Second Language” classes. But Vivian returned to my office a week later to ask that she be allowed to enroll in Work First.

Through an interpreter she told me she felt immersing herself in the language was probably going to be of most immediate assistance to her, and that she could do this better by participating in Work First. She never looked back from that date.

Employment Training Connection (ETC), the Work First contractor for St. Joseph County, also faced language barriers working with Vivian. With the assistance of an Internet translation program, staff at ETC helped Vivian prepare her resume, with job interviewing skills and transportation services, since she did not have a car.

“At first I hated it,” Vivian said. “They couldn’t talk to me, I didn’t understand them. But with the interpreter, that changed. I understood where they were coming from, and they give you that push that leads you onto the right path.”

New culture, old self-determination

While participating in the Work First program, Vivian received critical support services including Family Independence Program benefits, Child Development and Care assistance, food benefits and Medicaid.

Vivian made the most of all services available to her, even finding her own housing and arranging for utility services there without relying on the interpreter.

Vivian located part-time employment through the Transitional Employment Program offered by ETC working through Arch Services, Inc.

This program enabled her to become eligible for a car purchase after she had worked for Arch for 30 days using Employment Supportive Services and the Community Garage, a local collaborative that accepts donated vehicles, makes them road-worthy, then donates them to appropriate FIA customers.

After several months Vivian made such a powerful impression that Arch Inc. offered her permanent employment with an increase in pay. Vivian agreed to the change but said she still wanted to look for full-time employment.

On her first off day from Arch Inc., Vivian applied for full-time employment with TH Plastics, a company in Mendon, near the Kalamazoo County border.

Though it took nearly a month, TH Plastics—which has some Spanish-speaking employees—hired Vivian. She started work May 17 earning a salary that finally achieved her goal of “making it on her own.”

Great year with very happy ending

In an amazing one year and 2 days, Vivian had achieved every goal she set out to achieve—full-time employment, a house of her own, a car of her own, children who could speak English, and vastly improved English skills of her own.

She now receives Transitional Medicaid for her family, food benefit assistance, and continues to be eligible for low-income Child Development and Care services.

Vivian summed up her achievement in just a couple sentences saying: “I had a double goal: to show Puerto Ricans that they can do it if they work hard, and to show the world that Latinos can offer so much to society, if we are given the chance.”

She’s done exactly that!



Vivian with Jomar and her supervisor at TH Plastics, Joe Austin (right). Pictured left is TH Plastics human resources director Frank Perez.

Group translating FIA forms to Spanish

Document conversion program ongoing with employee assistance

The Family Independence Agency and similar federally funded units of state government are held to standards of the U.S. Department of Labor in the way they serve limited English proficiency citizens. Part of that standard includes planning to make services available in other languages.

To that end, a work group comprised of FIA employees from around the state has been meeting monthly since February to proofread and appropriately translate agency documents into Spanish, get them printed and circulated to counties, Central Office units, providers and the public.

Organizing work group efforts are a combined venture of FIA Office of Financial Assistance Program and Office Services, a unit of FIA Administrative Services that oversees agency printing.

While Vivian Gonzales' case was served in part through an Internet translation program, the work group was organized to ensure translation was given to the form of Spanish most often used by FIA customers in Michigan—basic Mexican-American Spanish.

Through Aug. 2, the group completed English to Spanish translation and proofreading on 55 FIA forms and publications that have been forwarded for printing. They include the Assistance Application, Temporary Denial Notice, Food Stamp Mini-Review, Shelter Verification, Child Day Care Services Application, Medical Program Eligibility Notice and Food Stamp Employment Program.

The group also reviewed and modified the Spanish telephone script for the "Automated Billing for Child Care System", the FIA interactive voice recording touch-tone billing system that became operational in August. There are about 20 other FIA forms and publications in process.

FIA employees participating in the process include: **Cindy Alvarez** and **Alma Rodriguez** from Oceana County FIA; **Irma Guzman**, FIA Information Technology Management Services; **Dan Esquivel**, Van Buren County FIA; **Eli Munoz**, Berrien County FIA; **Miguel Espinoza** from Cass County FIA; **Rebecca Perez-Leal** and **Ruth Perez Sales** from Ottawa County FIA.

Other employee participants include: **Teresa Pulido**, Wayne County Contract Management; **Neredia Portillo** of the Wayne County Fort Wayne District office; **Tila Almanza** of Kent County FIA, **Vita Pizana** from the FIA Bureau of Juvenile Justice; **Dan Cleary**, FIA Office of Financial Assistance Programs; **Nancy Fleming**, **Nancy Schueller** and **Petra Boyer** from FIA Office Services.

Nonemployee participants include **Veronica Madrid** of Lansing's Cristo Rey, a translator, and **Art Adan** from Trans-Type International, the agency that does translation for most FIA documents and publications.

■ For more information on the work group or forms and publications available in Spanish, contact FIA Office Services at (517) 373-6703.

Wayne County holds Food Stamp summit

New Orleans presenter tells how city got its error rates under control, hails efforts of Wayne County to do same

Participants engage in Wheel of Fortune-style “game”

By Gene Hashley, Communications Director

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As one of many efforts to reduce food stamp payment errors, the Wayne County FIA recently sponsored the Food Stamp Summit 2001 “Enhanced Funding: Mission Possible” sponsored by the county Accuracy Cuts Errors (or ACE) committee.

During the daylong session 150 family independence specialists, eligibility specialists and administrative support staff from all Wayne County district offices participated. Attendees heard a panel discussion, a keynote address and witnessed competition among the three zones to determine the winner of “the game”.

Mary Joseph, administrator of the New Orleans Department of Social Services (part of the Louisiana DSS), delivered the keynote address in which she talked about reducing her department’s food stamp error rate from 52 percent to 1.23 percent. This will be the third year that Louisiana DSS will receive enhanced funding.

Wayne County on right track

Joseph told the audience Wayne County FIA is doing all of the right things to reduce its food stamp error rate. She complimented the ACE committee for its efforts and encouraged the specialists to stay focused on the goal of receiving enhanced funding. New Orleans has a regional case reading team, similar to FIA Technical Assistance Teams, and a supervisory case reading requirement similar to Wayne County FIA.

“Our road to enhanced funding was a bumpy one” Joseph said. “We had to come together through creativity and cooperation to the point that everyone should be thinking every day when they come to work about keeping the error rate low.”

Joseph said Louisiana focused on case reading—lots of case reading—communication at all levels of the organization, and technology to bring its error rate down.

Joseph said she believes the key to reducing the error rate is providing quality customer service, both external and internal.

What we all want

“When you and I go into a business to make a purchase or receive a service, we want to see a smiling face behind the counter that services us in a quick, efficient, friendly manner and we want the



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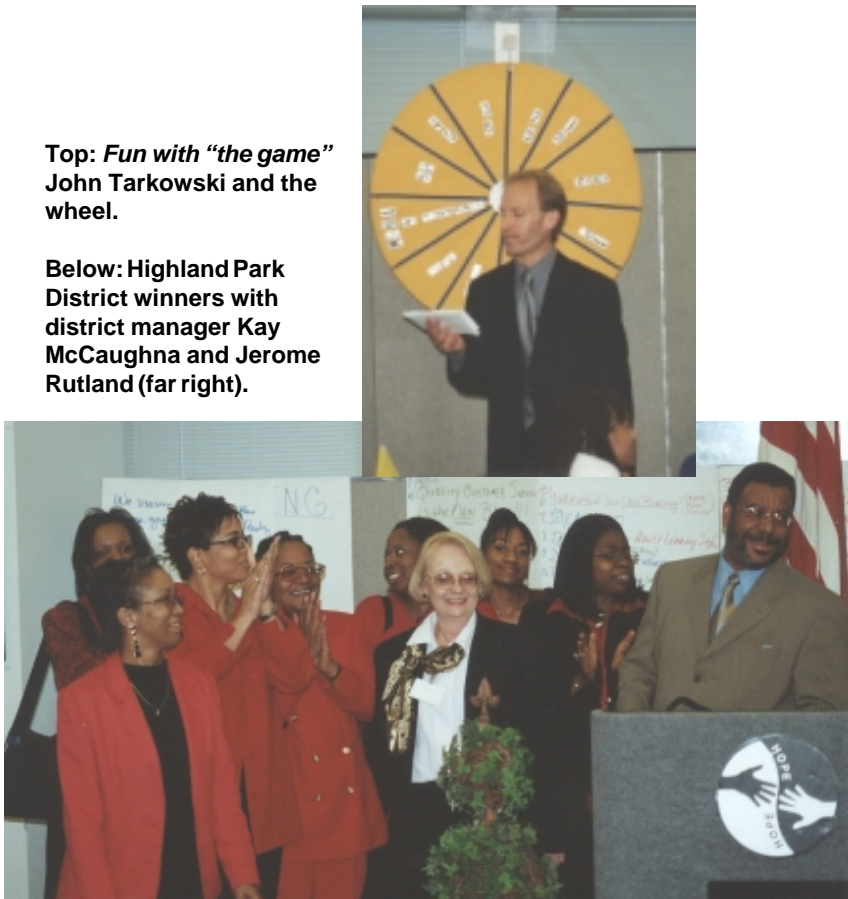
“Reducing the error rate must start with the people. The people who do the job are important from the security guard to the highest level of management and they all have to be involved in the process.”

--Mary Joseph, administrator, New Orleans Department of Social Services

service or product that we get to be right every time. Our customers should expect no less from us,” Joseph said. She addressed issues in state agencies during such times.

Top: Fun with “the game”
John Tarkowski and the wheel.

Below: Highland Park District winners with district manager Kay McCaughna and Jerome Rutland (far right).



“Maintaining employee morale is difficult, especially when you are trying to do a good job and someone comes along and says it’s not good enough,” she said. “There has to be accountability at all levels—everyone must decide to do the job right the first time and every time, just like you are supposed to.”

In New Orleans offices, supervisors are required to hold staff meetings every week to talk with staff about policy changes and all information needed to get the work done. Joseph said the meetings are critical to success as is recognizing and celebrating success at every step of the way.

She also said Louisiana reengineered its training to implement incremental training using the adult learning style.

During the summit, participants had the opportunity to take part in a panel discussion led by Wayne County FIA director Jerome Rutland, Wayne County deputy director Clarence Willis, former Quality Control director Steve Hilker and Gary Miller, payment accuracy coordinator.

Having fun with “the game”

Staff also had an opportunity to share best practices for reducing food stamp errors that were recorded on flip charts.

The playoff competition to determine the Wayne County FIA winner of “the game “ capped off the day with a great deal of excitement.

The game was patterned after The Wheel of Fortune. The wheel determined how many points a correct answer was worth and the team activating the buzzer first got first chance to answer a question asked by moderator John Tarkowski.

District offices in each of Zones 7, 8 and 9 previously competed to determine the zone finalist for the playoff.

Highland Park champs

The Highland Park district team in Zone 9 emerged as the county champions. Team members include Michelle Arnold, Linda Campbell, Sharisma Carpenter, Lynda Craig, Arbina Howze, Rhonda Jones and Delia Norwood.

The team was treated to lunch at Giulio’s in the Dearborn Hyatt Regency hotel with Jerome Rutland and Clarence Willis. The management team at the Highland Park district paid for a stretch limousine to transport the team in style to and from the lunch.

When the summit ended, staff left better informed and more determined to make the mission of receiving enhanced funding possible.

Maxey graduation celebrates 113 successes

Pair of graduation ceremonies portray youth that turned their lives around

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WHITMORE LAKE – While residential treatment is often considered a difficult time for young men, it is also a time of great achievement and growth. Just like thousands of their peers across the nation, 113 W.J. Maxey Boys Training School youth celebrated their academic graduation in June.

Families and staff honored the achievement of 27 young men from the two high secure centers in a graduation ceremony June 16. They are from a group often considered “unsalvageable” or the worst juveniles in the state. This notion was challenged as they proudly received their Certificates of Achievement.

State Sen. Valde Garcia from St. Johns, the guest speaker at the ceremony, gave an inspirational address on his belief in the bright future of each young man. But the words of the students held the attention of the audience.

The valedictorian from Maxey high secure spoke of his vision for continued success saying: “We have all realized that to get something positive out of our lives we have to make things happen. We can no longer sit around and watch life pass us by.

“We can no longer look for the easy ways to get ahead. We must put forth the extra effort to see positive results.”

The salutatorian echoed similar sentiments when he said: “Some people think their graduation is a final destination in life. My belief is that it is a beginning to a new phase of life.

“Now that we started the gears turning, it is up to us to keep them from stopping.”

A similar ceremony held June 23 honored 76 young men from Maxey’s closed-medium secure unit. Ten of the graduates were young men who successfully completed treatment and chose to return to campus with their families to celebrate their accomplishment.

Joseph Williams—a minister, author, counselor and motivational speaker—spoke June 23. He used examples from his past as a substance-abusing criminal to illustrate the ability to reverse a life going wrong.

But again the graduates provided the clearest examples of promise and success. The closed-medium secure valedictorian spoke of the many challenges he overcame when he said:

“My mind was so distorted and disturbed that I resented the help I knew I needed. I continued to dwell inside my world of pain. I went through many treatment programs but all to no avail. Then I came to Maxey. I have grown more spiritually and mentally than I have anywhere else in my life. This place has given me opportunities and the tools to make my goals complete. I went from straight E’s to graduating at the top of my class.”

He encouraged his peers with his secret to success, saying: “If you have nothing positive to represent yourself and have no motivation, you will fail. Everybody has something they excel at; when you find that one thing, stick with it. That’s what I did and I succeeded. When you find that thing you are good at it will feel great – like nothing can stop you except yourself.”

The celebrations had open house-style cookouts for graduates, their families and staff. Many youth spoke with pride of their achievements and in wonderment with their sometimes surprising success.

■ **W. J. Maxey Boys Training School is a residential juvenile justice facility administered by the Family Independence Agency. State laws prohibits using the names and photographs of the young men in question.**



Each of 10 honor graduates in the medium secure unit made a staff that depicted their life story.



Four graduates celebrate friendship and success after the ceremony.

First structured decision-making conference

FIA hosts gathering to offer information, share practices and recognize the importance of supervisors

By Sandy Ranville, Department Analyst
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The Family Independence Agency hosted the first annual Midwest Region Structured Decision-Making (SDM) Supervisor's Conference in June.

The conference was held for children's protective services and foster care supervisors and managers. It was conducted between June 11-13 at the Detroit Airport Doubletree Hotel. The conference goal was to recognize the importance of the first-line supervisor in the day-to-day delivery of children's services.

A multi-state committee organized the event—Luci Stibitz, Sharon Graham and JoAnne Nagy of the FIA were involved—and FIA Child and Family Services Administration provided funding. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, an contractor that developed SDM program for Michigan and the other states represented, participated as conference facilitator.

The conference agenda focused on strengthening child welfare operations by improving supervisors' knowledge of successful implementation, day-to-day operations, and key practice issues related to SDM.

More than 60 participants came from Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan representing public and private child welfare operations that use a variety of SDM models. The conference included several small round table opportunities for supervisors to present, share and discuss strengths and issues with an emphasis on working together to generate solutions. There were also large group presentations on data and outcome information available for both children's protective services and foster care. The conference agenda included sessions on data and its use, data and outcome information, supervisory practices, ways to use and view SDM and brainstorming.

Structured decision-making is a professionally-based case management tool designed to improve consistency, effectiveness and service delivery for children and families. SDM includes statistically-valid assessment tools that assist worker decision-making. SDM tools assess safety, risk of subsequent harm, and child or family needs. It became statewide policy in CPS, juvenile justice and foster care during the 1990s.

Evaluations from attenders indicated the conference was a very positive experience. Planning coordinators, including a representative from each jurisdiction, are beginning to make plans for next year's conference.



Conferees from outside Michigan point to their home states. More than 60 child professionals attended.

Barry County youth volunteers honored

“Fostering Excellence” noted for doing just that

By Julie Wiles, Volunteer Coordinator
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GRAND RAPIDS—When the Governor’s Service Awards were presented to honor Michigan’s volunteers in May, a group of Barry County volunteers came home with no prize but the recognition they are doing a great job for foster children.

It is no secret that ordinary citizens become extraordinary volunteers in times of need. This was demonstrated at the May awards program, when Barry County’s “Fostering Excellence” program was nominated and honored as one of five finalists for the “Exemplary Volunteer Service Award”--Youth Service Club/ Civic Organization.

More than 250 people and groups were nominated for awards during the annual volunteer recognition event sponsored by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

“Fostering Excellence” is a youth-led volunteer program with the Barry County Family Independence Agency. Coordinated by Carolyn Mansfield, a valuable FIA volunteer, the youth volunteers are Kristi Spurgeon, Lindsey Lambert, Meghan Osgood, Melissa Hodges, Julia Johncock, and Karey Schlachter.

This year-old group helps identify and meet the enrichment needs of abused and neglected children that have been placed in foster care. They raise awareness for foster homes, and help with grant writing and obtaining funding needs for these special children. They have raised \$20,000 in grant funds during the past year.

The Fostering Excellence Program has received considerable financial support from the Barry County Community Foundation’s Youth Action Committee.

During the May event, “Fostering Excellence” students were personally honored by state Rep. Gary Newell of Saranac at a reception held in their honor. They also received a state of Michigan Certificate of Special Tribute signed by Gov. John Engler.

Karey Schlachter told the *Hastings Reminder* May 29 her participation in Fostering Excellence has been more than rewarding.

“You know you’re helping the kids who are in need in Barry County,” she said. “It’s made me a lot more aware of things that happen in our community.

“It’s neat knowing I helped make a difference... It’s really rewarding.”

A number of local officials were on hand at the ceremony including Barry County FIA Board president Jan Geiger, Eaton County FIA Board president Susan Hoffman, Carolyn Mansfield, and Mary Hodges.

Other FIA representatives at the event included Outstate Operations director Jim Nye, Zone 3 manager Kathryn McDonald, Barry-Eaton County FIA director Don Rewa, Shaun Culp, Jan Baszler, Kenneth O’Hara, Keith Behm and I.



At the ceremony (from left): Russell Mawby of Michigan Community Service Commission, Julia Johncock, Karey Schlachter, Meghan Osgood, Melissa Hodges, Lindsey Lambert, First Lady Michelle Engler representing the commission, and Kristi Spurgeon.

Second Youth Leadership Forum held at MSU

Program helps school students with disabilities become community leaders

By Margaret Heiser

Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns, Lansing

Telephone (517) 334-8355

EAST LANSING—Twenty-five high school students with disabilities converged on the Michigan State University campus and participated in a unique leadership event June 24-28. The Michigan Youth Leadership Forum is a five-day leadership training program for high school students coordinated by Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns in conjunction with representatives from 23 other agencies.

During the five days, student delegates developed personal leadership plans. Among comments made by enthusiastic delegates: "I will become more involved in my community," "I will not be ashamed of my disability and will become more confident," and, "I will teach other kids about the different disabilities."

Commission on Disability Concerns chairperson Lydia Graber said the goal of this forum is to develop tomorrow's disability leaders today. "The forum was a huge success," she said. "Mentors and students were asking to come back next year!"

On June 27, participants gathered in the state Capitol House Appropriations Room, took seats behind the microphones, and held a lively mock debate.

Earlier in the week, using consensus building, the students had selected the debate topic for their proposed bill: Mandate disability awareness training for educators. Debate points included:

- Educators cannot effectively interact with students with a variety of disabilities unless they have an understanding of the needs of those students.

- Without disability awareness training, many educators have lower expectations of students with disabilities and treat them differently from other students.

- Disability awareness leads to equal access to education for students with disabilities.

- Requiring disability awareness training as part of educators' continuing education and

as part of regular inservice training would not create new time requirements nor create an unfunded mandate.

The "opposition" debated that other groups would demand the same opportunity to include their issues in educators' required continuing education. After debate, The bill passed 18-7 by roll call vote.

"The power I felt on Legislative Day in that room was great!" reported one of student delegate.

"Because of participating in this leadership program, the students now realize what it takes to create a change in the system," said Ian Minicuci, an MCDC commissioner who served as a mentor during the forum. "Over time, as they gain maturity and further understanding of the legislative process, the students will become leaders not only in the disability community but also in society, as a whole."

Students are selected to attend the forum through a competitive application process. The forum is provided at no cost to families through the generous donations of private and public entities. FIA director Douglas E. Howard presented certificates to the students at the end of the week.

■ For more information about the Michigan Youth Leadership Forum, contact Gerry Muttty by phone at 517-334-8000, voice/TTY; email at muttyg@state.mi.us; or via the Internet at www.mfia.state.mi.us/mcdc/mcdc.htm

The 25 participants at this year's forum heard from legislators & adult mentors and later gathered in the state Capitol where they engaged in a lively mock debate.



Alcona County woman is 92nd Achiever

Arizona resident came to Michigan with three kids to avoid domestic violence

By Vicki Dahl, Family Independence Manager
Alcona County Family Independence Agency
Telephone (989) 724-2117



Leah Mathis

HARRISVILLE—With family and friends in attendance, Leah Mathis, an Alcona County mother of three, was honored as Achiever of the Month during a July 20 ceremony.

On behalf of Doug Howard, FIA Outstate Operations director James Nye presented the award at the United Methodist Church in Harrisville. Nye praised Leah not only for the example she set for her children, but the courage and persistence she has demonstrated in overcoming adversity.

Mathis, a Mikado resident, came to the FIA in August 2000. A former Arizona resident, Leah had brought her children to Michigan to escape a domestic violence situation. While in an Arizona hospital, Leah credits an outreach worker “who came back a second time” as being a key factor in her decision to leave.

Housing an issue for new Michigan family

At the time of her first contact with the FIA, Leah had been unable to locate rental housing and was residing in a small travel trailer provided by her father. She had saved some money but had no source of income and was facing the prospect of the coming winter months without adequate housing for her family.

Alcona County FIA family independence specialist Christine Stockwell was assigned to work with Leah and her family. Christine referred Leah to NEMSCA Michigan Works! for job search assistance while the FIA provided Family Independence Program, Medicaid and Food Stamp benefits to assist Leah and her children until she was able to secure employment.

Finding work in small towns

Due to her housing concerns, Leah was also referred for prevention services with Alcona County social services specialist Jean Peirce.

In the month that followed, NEMSCA Michigan Works! helped Leah in her employment search. In September 2000 Leah secured part-time employment as a cook with the Greenbush Tavern. But this income was not enough to support her family and she continued to receive FIP.

The concern to secure adequate housing for her family continued to be foremost in Leah’s mind. Alcona County parent aide Patricia Jilbert was enlisted to assist the family. As in many rural counties, the search for decent, affordable housing can be daunting as appropriate housing isn’t always readily available.

Leah’s stick-to-it-iveness and state partnership keys to success

Leah, however, wasn’t one to give up. Both Jean Peirce and Patricia Jilbert credit Leah’s positive outlook and tenacity for getting her through.

During the ceremony, Peirce said, “Even when I was losing hope because there weren’t enough resources available to help Leah’s family, she didn’t give up – she always remained positive and always wore a smile.”

Leah’s outlook paid off. In February 2001, she gained additional part-time employment as a cook with the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department. They liked her work so well that in March they offered her a full-time position with benefits. Michigan Works! helped Leah with vehicle support, work clothing, and subsidized her wages for the first two weeks of employment. In May, after a long search, Leah located a rental home. FIA staff helped her move in and assisted with items to help her set up housekeeping.

Leah credited her family and the partnership between FIA and Michigan Works! for her success. “I want to thank my children and my family and some great people I’ve met in the past year who have helped me so much,” she said.

Leah’s FIP case closed in March. She continues to receive Transitional Medicaid and food benefits.

Child Development and Care improvements

Input from FIA staff helps improve services and local delivery

Thanks to the efforts of many people, major improvements to the Child Development and Care program took effect Aug. 1 that will improve services, simplify billing and make the program easier to administer at the local level.

This was realized through a collaborative effort headed by Ann Marie Sims, director of special projects for the FIA. It was comprised of local office and central office staff including Willa Swartz, Andrew Gyurscik, Chris Earley, Dan Cleary, Gregg Hoag, Kathy Greiner, Kay Andrzejak, Rochelle Allen and Paul Nelson. Bonnie Reno provided leadership and direction to the work group.

Recommendations become policy

Once the work group completed their recommendations, FIA management reviewed recommendations to identify which could be implemented immediately and which should be deferred. Swartz then coordinated the work of policy writers who made the many changes needed for implementation. Help with that effort came from Patti Isaac, Bonnie Reno, Sean O'Keefe, and Gregg Hoag. Swartz coordinated the revisions to forms, as needed, with help from Kathi Pioszak, O'Keefe, Reno and Billy Jones.

Major systems work was required to implement the policy changes. O'Keefe and Hoag coordinated this massive effort with help from Steve Craun, Arlene Kipper, Kathy Kennell and many others who worked behind the scenes to provide automation support.

Others were enlisted to design the telephone billing system. Lois Brennan, Joe Hildenbrand, Roger Darden, Linda Brzak, Rich Burgis, Jean Foess, Don Niemi, Nancy Presocki, Brad Smith, Dan Werk, Greg Willis, Sue Doby and others contributed.

New ABCs

The long hours and tight deadlines led to major improvements in the Child Development and Care program. Among them is new Automated Billing for Child Care System, or ABCs. With the pay period beginning Aug. 12, all child care providers must bill FIA for their child care services. Family day care homes, day care aides and relative care providers, who previously have not been required to bill FIA, will bill by telephone. By responding to prompts, they will enter billing information that will generate payment.

Day care centers and group day care home providers, who are accustomed to billing FIA, will use a new scannable billing form. This will result in fewer errors and quicker processing. Internet billing, the last piece of automated billing, will be available to all child care providers at a later date.

Policy changes implemented

Policy changes effective Aug. 1 include:

- The redetermination period for child care services will be lengthened from six months to one year. Longer periods of eligibility will result in fewer disruptions in child care plans.
- Authorization for child care will be either 70 hours (part-time) or 140 hours (full-time) based on the parent's work schedule or approved activity.
- Less paperwork will be required to open a case and start day care payments.
- More families will qualify for an early cash payment to pay for child care.
- Child care payments may be authorized to cover care provided for up to 30 days before the parent's request to FIA for subsidized child care, as long as the parent was eligible during that time.
- A program group size of one allows increased eligibility for "kinship care" cases. In addition, only the income of the minor parents who live with their parents or guardian is considered in determining eligibility to allow the minor parent to complete high school.
- Expanded categorical eligibility now includes SSI recipients and provides a transition child care program for former FIP recipients for six bi-weekly pay periods.
- Child care for post-secondary education is provided when approved by the Michigan Works! Agency. Income eligible recipients can receive up to 26 pay periods of coverage.
- The family preservation need reason has been expanded to cover the needs of all program group members. These are only a few of the changes to the Child Development and Care program that will improve services to our customers, to providers of child care and to local office staff. More changes will be implemented in the coming years. Thank you, FIA staff, for your creative suggestions, your collaborative efforts and hard work. For more information contact the Child Development and Care Unit at (517) 335-6183.

A small success story

A young man's coming of age from delinquency to community member

By Lisa Cutcher

Pine Lodge, Lansing

Telephone (517) 334-6529

■ Pine Lodge is a residential juvenile justice facility administered by the FIA.

Derek Sanders grew up in the Detroit area in a single parent home with his mother and younger siblings. His life was very unstable most of the time. Derek had little supervision and did as he pleased the majority of the time.

Derek began using drugs at a young age and eventually ended up in the juvenile justice system with a charge of arson. Derek, as you will see, has grown drastically from being in the juvenile system and with the Family Independence Agency.

Derek is a resident at Pine Lodge Community Justice Center in Lansing. He arrived at Pine Lodge after he successfully completed the program at Maxey Boys Training School. Derek has taken advantage of many balanced and restorative justice opportunities while at Pine Lodge.



Derek Sanders on duty with the fire department.

Talking the talk with peers

Derek has spoken to students at Lansing Community College and Michigan State University criminal justice classes about his life growing up and his growth while placed with the Family Independence Agency.

He's discussed his future plans and where he would like to go. The students were very pleased with Derek's honesty, forthrightness and his outlook on life. It was beneficial for the students because they are planning on working in the juvenile field and it gave them first hand information from someone who'd been there and done that.

Derek leads groups and talks to young people about substance abuse related issues at Insight Substance Abuse Counseling Center and Camp Highfields in Onondaga. He attempts to give young people an insight into his life and deter them from following down a path similar to his own.

Recent accomplishment

Derek's most relevant accomplishment while in the program at Pine Lodge was volunteering with the Lansing Fire Department.

Derek has been interested in becoming a fire fighter for many years. When he arrived in the program at Pine Lodge he talked with his advocate about this interest. This, in relation to his criminal offense, sparked the opportunity to attempt to develop community service with the Lansing Fire Department.

The Fire Department was open to developing the opportunity for Derek and all parties took advantage of the situation. Derek began volunteering every Wednesday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

continues next page

A small success story *continues from previous page*

He participated in many activities and learned about all aspects of the unit and assisted where needed. LFD employees were very pleased with Derek's accomplishments and will be contacting him for any special events or happenings where his assistance would be valuable.

Derek is finished with volunteering and is getting ready to complete the program at Pine Lodge. He will be transitioning into Independent Living in the Lansing area soon.

About balanced and restorative justice

In January 1998, the FIA Bureau of Juvenile Justice announced a major initiative to bring balanced and restorative justice principles and practices into delinquency operations across the state.

Restorative justice focuses on the harm that is caused by wrongdoing, and on the obligation that this creates for the offender to repair harm done to the victim and to the offended community. Features of restorative justice include:

- A balance between three goals—accountability to victims and community, competency development for youth, and community protection.
- Victims and the offended community become much more central to the processes of resolving juvenile crime and correcting behavior.
- “Paying back” is presumed to help the offender as well as the victim.
- Because crime impacts victims and others in the community, community service may be an alternative or supplement to direct restitution.

Note: Derek Sanders is an 18-year-old adult who gave his written permission to publish this story, as did his guardian.

State-Tribal summit scene for new beginning

Governor signs order establishing Tribal authority, outlining dispute resolution

LANSING—Gov. John Engler hosted the first State-Tribal Summit May 22, a historic occasion for Michigan tribal nations and the state. Leaders representing Michigan's 12 federally recognized Indian Tribes also attended as well as governor's Cabinet members.

There the governor signed Executive Order 2001-2, a policy statement on state-Tribal affairs. The order established formal recognition of Tribal sovereignty saying, "Like the state of Michigan, the 12 Tribes are sovereign governments, recognized by the Constitution of the United States of America...Like the state of Michigan, Tribal governments exercise authority and jurisdiction over their lands and citizens." The order also:

- Outlines a dispute resolution process between state agencies and Tribes to take place before court intervention is sought.

- Establishes that a state-Tribal summit takes place annually.

- Establishes a governor's advisor on state-Tribal affairs responsible for implementation of the executive order. The advisor will be responsible for development of a state-Tribal accord that defines the relationship between the state and federally recognized Tribes.

During the summit, state department directors provided information on programs and services their agencies have in place to support native Americans in Michigan.

FIA director Howard discussed many FIA initiatives including a partnership between the FIA, Tribal partners, other agency and organizations that meets quarterly. It determines the direction FIA programs and services serving Native American children will take in accordance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.

He also discussed the Leelanau County Family Group Decision Making pilot that began in May 1999 with 21 Native American children in out-of-home care. By February 2000 there were ten Native American children being supervised by FIA, a 50 percent reduction. By March 2001, there were only two children in foster care for abuse-neglect reasons and no subsequent referrals of native American children to foster care for abuse or neglect since the pilot started.

Howard also discussed the outreach services-Indian outreach worker program, FIA Indian Child Welfare Policy, Tribal Families First program, medical and benefits programs.

"We consider Tribal leaders and administrators our partners in ensuring services we offer to native American citizens are accessible, relevant and culturally appropriate," he said. "Each Tribe has a culture and rich history. We seek, as an agency, to meet the individual needs of these sovereign nations during our daily interactions."

FIA juvenile justice system gets a JJOLT!

New computer program is a major improvement for Bureau of Juvenile Justice

By Sean Brady

FIA Bureau of Juvenile Justice (BJJ), Lansing

Telephone (517) 335-6189

LANSING – On July 1 the FIA brought online a new computer system, the Juvenile Justice Online Technology (or JJOLT). This will significantly improve access to information on Michigan delinquents while reducing paperwork burden on BJJ staff.

JJOLT is designed to replace several outdated databases and to computerize many records that are now stored only on paper. The system ties together personnel and facilities across Michigan. This allows more rapid transfer of data and reduces the repetitive entry of identical information onto multiple computer systems and paper documents.

The JJOLT system is designed for use by, and to be useful to, staff in the juvenile justice system. Administrators and support staff will use JJOLT; so will youth group leaders, intake workers, teachers, and nurses. The more people using the system, the more complete it will become, allowing information to be shared across the entire juvenile justice system.

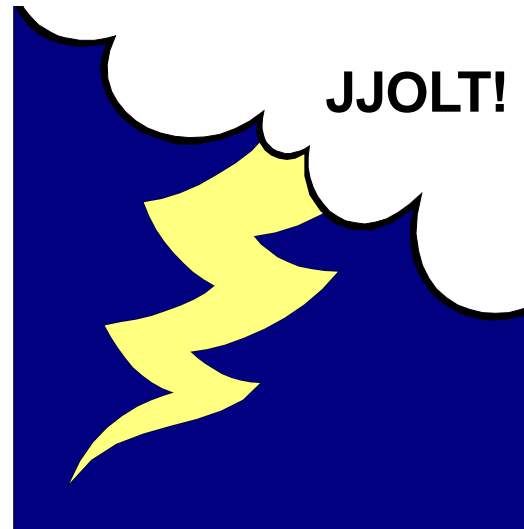
The program has been developed from a commercial software package originally designed for foster care and adoptive services created by Global Vision Technologies of Brentwood, Tenn. The company initially modified this program for Wayne County for use with their juvenile justice cases. BJJ is ordering major expansions and improvements in the software to meet FIA's specific needs, but building on an existing program has significantly reduced the time and expense required to move the program into the field. The contract for the system was signed on March 30 and the system became active only 91 days later.

The federal Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant program provides funding for the system that provides needed resources to the juvenile justice system with a focus on improvements in technology. The block grant program committee, chaired by Judge Patricia Gardner, has chosen to use a portion of the available funds to support JJOLT because it makes possible substantial improvements in data sharing.

JJOLT is designed to be fully compatible with other juvenile justice initiatives including balanced and restorative justice and performance-based standards. The computer system will, for the first time, allow BJJ to track progress in these programs without laborious hand counting of paper records.

Following a major trend in new information systems, JJOLT is a web-based application available to any computer which has access to the Internet and which uses a recent Microsoft web browser. No special software is required on the individual personal computers that connect to the system. The web-based approach has many advantages including reduced telecommunication costs and the ability to update the software quickly and easily.

Security and reliability are very important considerations for JJOLT, which controls system access with confidential user names and passwords while data encryption scrambles



information before it is sent over the Internet, ensuring that sensitive client records will be protected. The servers that run the system are protected against unauthorized access and accidents and are backed-up by a second set of computers located in a different city.

The JJOLT project includes several implementation phases. The first version is basic, covering only the most essential functions of BJJ such as juvenile intake, provider placement, and treatment planning. Improvements are planned at regular intervals to add functions and make the system easier to use. The next phase of the project is scheduled to be completed by October 1 and will incorporate many additions including a new education module and report generation capability.

The number of staff with access to JJOLT will increase in several steps. The first users are the state-operated juvenile justice residential treatment facilities and the juvenile assignment system. More than 175 staff from 17 BJJ facilities trained during May and June were the first users to access the system the day it went live. One hundred and fifty additional BJJ staff, including medical and educational personnel, will be brought into the system over the next several months.

The next group to use JJOLT will be the staff of all privately operated justice residential treatment facilities. FIA contracts with the private providers are now being modified to require JJOLT participation starting Oct. 1. This addition will bring more than 300 new users from at least 90 private facilities onto the system, significantly enlarging the database. Among other benefits, the use of a common system by all

JJOLT is designed to be fully compatible with other juvenile justice initiatives including balanced and restorative justice and performance-based standards. The computer system will, for the first time, allow BJJ to track progress in these programs without laborious hand counting of paper records.

residential facilities, public and private, will allow rapid and accurate comparisons of programs, populations, and success rates.

Further expansion of JJOLT is expected but is less well defined. BJJ and the FIA Outstate Operations are investigating the possibility of connecting juvenile justice specialists in the FIA county offices to the JJOLT system. Specialists in several counties will soon be using the system on an experimental basis to better define this option.

The BJJ is also working to bring county prosecutors, court administrators, county juvenile officers, and local law enforcement onto JJOLT. Finally, in the long term, it may be possible to integrate JJOLT with other FIA and state of Michigan information systems such as SWSS and the Michigan Data Warehouse.

In addition to the groups considering using JJOLT, several other organizations either have or are considering their own systems based on the same basic software package used to build it. Wayne County, with its very large county juvenile system, is already using the Juvenile Accountability Information System from which JJOLT was developed. Similar systems are in development or under consideration for the city of Detroit, Oakland County, Spectrum Human Services, and Ennis Center for Children.

Combined with the growth of JJOLT, the spread of compatible systems offers potential for a truly integrated statewide juvenile information system.



Michigan.gov

State's new website was launched in July

An effort to make easier access to state resources

By Janna Schmidt
e-Michigan Office, Lansing
jaschmidt@DC.COM

State employees, citizens, businesses, tourists and other customers have a new way of finding information or obtaining state services on the Internet since e-Michigan launched Michigan's new web site, **Michigan.gov**, in July.

Customers can interact with the state online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, rather than waiting in line and only during regular workday office hours. The site simplifies the process customers use to find information, obtain forms and publications, and obtain answers to their questions.

Michigan.gov is organized by customer needs—such as license renewal, day care information, and campground reservations—rather than organizational structure, department or agency. Customers can find what they need within a few mouse clicks without having to know which agency provides a specific service.

To make it even easier to locate information, the site employs a search engine that allows visitors to search web sites of all state agencies at once.

Another exciting feature of **Michigan.gov** is voluntarily personalization. Visitors can indicate their key topics of interest in a one-time, easy-to-use voluntary registration process on Michigan.gov. Then, each time they return to the site they will be provided with updated information on their favorite topics.

"This is more than a website," said Stephanie Comai, director of the e-Michigan Office. "It is everyone's online portal to all Michigan government services and information."

The e-Michigan Office was established as a temporary state agency in May 2000 to lead state e-government initiatives.

www.Michigan.gov was launched in mid-July but customers could enjoy some new online services earlier. Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation launched online lodging, golf course and harbor reservations. Coupled with the campgrounds reservations system launched last fall, these services establish Michigan as the first state to make all four types of reservations available to customers online.

e-Michigan benefits for Michigan customers

- Conduct self-service transactions with Michigan on a 24 hour 7 day basis.
- Access information and services on-line, without having to wait in line.
- Voluntarily personalize each web experience with Michigan government.
- Focus on customer needs, not our organizational structure.
- Enjoy a common look-and-feel to all websites.
- Use a universal search engine to find information from across agencies.
- Conduct license renewals, invoicing, payments and forms submission in minutes.
- Enjoy more focused attention by agency staff with more time to help with transactions.

For more information about e-Michigan, new online services or www.Michigan.gov, visit the e-Michigan Web site (www.state.mi.us/migov/e-michigan).

Intercepted letters

Date: July 31
To: Vicki Weller
Subj: Bonnie Corkwell

I'm a protective services worker from Wayne County Intake and Referral and have been working with Bonnie Corkwell for what now amounts to years. Over the past few months I have been working with her more closely as she develops the new I & R program for us. As I sent Bonnie yet another email with yet another problem or concern today, it dawned on me that all I have ever done is point out problems, errors, blunders and boo boo's to Bonnie and, every single time, she handles the problem in a cheerful helpful way. She is so good at what she does! In my job here I have to talk with many other CPS intake workers in other counties and none of them use this program. Even with all of the little glitches we may have, this program is so much better than anything being used for CPS in this state. The very best part of this is the constant support we have. Bonnie always calls us back. She answers her phone, her email or her page quickly and always knows just what to do. As I help her in testing this new program I must stop and commend her for the outstanding job that she has done and continues to do for us. It dawned on me today that she has other tasks to perform other than just making this all happen for us. It is a huge job that most people would stress out under and yet she just keeps on going. Simply put, Bonnie is the best! She deserves a huge pat on the back, a gold star and a hug for a fine job in the past, today and in the future. Wayne County CPS is lucky to have Bonnie Corkwell on our team.

Pat Mattson

Wayne County Family Independence Agency

■ Bonnie Corkwell is an information technology analyst and Vicki Weller is her supervisor, an information technology manager in the FIA Information Technology Management Services Administration. Sue Doby submitted this letter.

Date: July 5
To: Directors and Managers
Subj: 2001 Six Weeks to Wellness campaign results

During the 2001 Six Weeks to Wellness campaign, 3,732 FIA employees and 168 household members participated. This means 30.65 percent of FIA employees participated in the campaign, the highest level of employee participation attained within FIA since 6W2W was first run in 1992. Most of those who enrolled completed the campaign (3,565 employees and 104 household members). The FIA traveling trophies for the "Best Joint Effort Toward Wellness" are awarded each year to recognize the highest level of employee participation among all FIA offices enrolled as a 6W2W worksite. 6W2W work sites with 2001 top participation levels include:

Small Offices (60 employees or less)

First Place: Baraga County & FIA Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, 100 percent
Second Place: Genesee & Macomb County Central Administration, 91.67 percent
Third Place: Child Welfare Institute, CFS, Central Office, 90.91 percent
Fourth Place: Livingston County, 89.74 percent
Fifth Place: Luce County, 87.50 percent

Medium Offices (61 to 120 employees)

First Place: Wayne County Tireman District, 100 percent
Second Place: Wayne County Romulus District, 81.69 percent
Third Place: Wayne County McNichols-Goddard District, 72.37 percent
Fourth Place: Wayne County Kercheval-Townsend District, 62.16 percent
Fifth Place: Wayne County Taylor District, 60.87 percent

Large Offices (121 employees or more)

First Place: Genesee County McCree District, 80.92 percent
Second Place: Genesee County Children's District, 80.67 percent
Third Place: Wayne County Greydale-Grand River District, 80.30 percent
Fourth Place: Genesee County Pierson District, 75.38 percent
Fifth Place: Genesee County North District, 58.50 percent

continues on next page

Intercepted letters *continued from page 23*

Congratulations go to all participants and to the above offices and much appreciation to supporters and work site health promotion coordinators who facilitated the campaign.

Douglas E. Howard

Date: July 3
To: Mary Thompson, Muskegon County FIA
Subj: Radio interview

On Thursday June 14, while I was on my way to a long weekend in Chicago, I happened to tune in to a public radio station in the western part of Michigan. While I listened to the news the radio, I was fortunate to catch a report about the delivery of FIP services to customers of the Muskegon County FIA, and extremely fortunate to hear your interview with representatives from public radio. I must tell you that my wife, who is not a state employee, and I were extremely impressed with what you said and how you said it. Your genuine concern for your customer's welfare, your ability to empathize with the difficult circumstances of your customer's life, your belief in the value of the work that you do, and your positive attitude came across very clearly on the radio. You were a wonderful spokesperson for our agency and our staff, and you sent a positive message about us across the state! Congratulations on a job well done, and many thanks.

Melvin Kaufman, District Manager

Oakland County Family Independence Agency

■ Submitted by Janeane Morrissey, Muskegon County FIA director.

For information about FIA programs, consult our Internet web address: www.mfia.state.mi.us

<p><i>The Family Independence Agency will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, height, weight, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to an FIA Office in your county.</i></p>
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